



## **1. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design CPTED**

We live with crime every day. It has become, unfortunately, a fact of life. Discussions on the subject have traditionally focused much less on prevention than on arrest and punishment; measures that cannot be taken until after a crime has been committed.

Only in the last 20 years have designers and architects begun to see the need to plan and build with more than just the traditional threats of nature --- fire, earthquakes and hurricanes -- in mind. They must now consider the threat of crime.

Enter a new approach to crime prevention - Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design - or CPTED. Much more far-reaching than dead bolts on doors and locks on windows, CPTED principles can be applied easily and inexpensively to building or remodeling, and have been implemented in communities across the nation. The results have been impressive; in some CPTED communities, criminal activity has decreased by as much as 40 percent.

What is the secret to CPTED? Design that eliminates or reduces criminal behavior and at the same time encourages people to "keep an eye out" for each other. These are just a few of the ingredients that go into creating an effective CPTED environment... that is, a safer more livable community.

*"The proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in the fear and incidence of crime, and an improvement of the quality of life."*

## **2. Strategies**

There are four overlapping CPTED strategies:

### **1. Natural Surveillance**

A design concept directed primarily at keeping intruders easily observable. Promoted by features that maximize visibility of people, parking areas and building entrances: doors and windows that look out on to streets and parking areas; pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and streets; front porches; adequate nighttime lighting.

### **2. Territorial Reinforcement**

Physical design can create or extend a sphere of influence. Users then develop a sense of territorial control while potential offenders, perceiving this control, are discouraged. Promoted by features that define property lines and distinguish private spaces from public spaces using landscape plantings, pavement designs, gateway treatments, and "CPTED" fences.

### **3. Natural Access Control**

A design concept directed primarily at decreasing crime opportunity by denying access to crime targets and creating in offenders a perception of risk. Gained by designing streets, sidewalks, building entrances and neighborhood gateways to clearly indicate public routes and discouraging access to private areas with structural elements.

### **4. Target Hardening**

Accomplished by features that prohibit entry or access: window locks, dead bolts for doors, interior door hinges.



### **3. Guidelines**

The following guidelines are offered by CPTED for office facilities:

#### **1. Natural Access Control**

- Public entrances should be clearly defined by walkways and signage
- Building entrances should be accentuated through architectural elements, lighting, landscaping and/or paving stones

#### **2. Natural Surveillance**

- restrooms should be observable from nearby offices
- all exterior doors should be well lit
- hallways should be well lit
- dumpsters should not create blind spots or hiding areas
- windows and exterior doors should be visible from the street or by neighbors
- all four facades should have windows
- parking spaces should be assigned to each employee and visitor
- parking areas should be visible from windows, side parking areas should be visible from the street
- parking and entrances should be observable by as many people as possible
- parking area and walkways should be well lit
- dumpster should be clearly visible
- shrubbery should be kept under two feet in height for visibility
- the lower branches of existing trees should be kept at least ten feet off the ground
- windows should not be obstructed with signs
- windows and doors should have views into hallways

#### **3. Territorial Reinforcement**

- perimeters should be defined by landscaping or fencing
- fences should be designed to maintain visibility from street
- exterior private areas should be easily distinguishable from public areas
- security and/or reception area should be positioned to screen all entrances

#### **4. Target Hardening**

- exterior door knobs should be a minimum of 40 inches from adjacent windows



- case hardened dead bolt locks should be installed on all exterior doors with a minimum of one-inch throw
- door hinges should be installed on the interior side of the door or tamper proof hinges used

Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design guidelines can go a long way in making an environment safe. As stated earlier, criminal activity in CPTED cities is on the decline, but these principles alone cannot make, and more importantly keep, a community safe.

CPTED can eliminate problem areas: the badly lit parking lot, the blind alley and the public telephone stuffed in the dark corner. Hopefully, along with the feelings of safety and security that

CPTED brings, will come a feeling of responsibility for our neighbor. That is the greatest crime prevention technique of all.

Further information on Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design is available through the International Crime Prevention Association on line at [www.cpted.net](http://www.cpted.net)

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